

Alliance of Downriver Watersheds

Meeting Notes

October 8, 2024 1:00 pm

VIRTUAL MTG



- 1) Welcome: Ron Akers from Van Buren Township opened the meeting. In attendance were:

Designated or Alternate Community Representatives from:

Allen Park
Belleville
Dearborn Heights
Ecorse
Flat Rock
Gibraltar
Grosse Ile Township
Inkster
Lincoln Park
Melvindale
Riverview
Rockwood
Romulus
Southgate
Sumpter Township
Taylor
Trenton
Van Buren Township
Wayne County
Westland
Woodhaven-Brownstown
School District
Wyandotte

- Dearborn Heights – John Danci
- Ecorse – Brent Kraft (Giffels Webster)
- Gibraltar – Marsha Kozmor
- Lincoln Park – John Kozuh
- Romulus – Don Straub
- Sumpter Township – Anthony Burdick
- Taylor – Kelly McRobb- Ackland
- Trenton – Kevin Sargent
- Van Buren Township – Ron Akers
- Woodhaven-Brownstown Schools – Kaitlyn Steeves
- Wyandotte –Greg Mayhew

Other Interested Parties:

- Jack Cotrone, EGLE WRD
- Leah Groya, L Groya Consulting
- Jennifer Kangas, HRWC
- Pam Labadie, HRWC
- Ric Lawson, HRWC
- David Lossing, HRWC
- Valerie Novaes, OHM Advisors
- Andrea Paine, HRWC
- Kathleen Sexton, EGLE WRD
- Elizabeth Thacker, OHM Advisors
- McKenzi Waliczek - Friends of the Detroit River
- Maaike Wielenga, HRWC

OFFICIAL ACTIONS of the ADW taken at the meeting are shown in bold capitalized letters.
Action items for the future are shown in bold italics.

1) Welcome and Introductions

- a. Roll call of Alliance Members and Alternates present – roll call was performed and there was not a quorum present.
- b. Introductions of meeting attendees
- c. Addition or changes to draft agenda – there were no changes
- d. Approval of May 21, 2024 meeting notes – quorum not present to vote

2) Friends of Detroit River/Ecorse Creek Committee Updates

- McKenzie Waliczek reported that they are continuing to prioritize projects and are gearing up for limited field assessments on high-ranking sites.
- The EC Committee is seeing grant opportunities to have priority sites to design/construction phase.
- North Branch drain maintenance project by Wayne County – nearing completion of reach 1 and getting bids for reach 2. In general, complaints from residents are fewer. Contact Wayne County directly with concerns.
- September 14th cleanup / celebration - 23 participants cleanup removed over 1,500 lbs. of trash.

3) Finance Committee Report

- a. Financial Status Report
 - Jennifer Kangas provided the financial status report, which was included in the packet.
 - Pending dues payments from Inkster and Riverview
 - There is an estimated fund balance of \$233k for the end of 2024.
- b. ADW Officers
 - John Danci is now with the City of Dearborn Heights and has agreed to remain in the position of ADW treasurer.
 - There is still a vacant position for the Vice-Chair position.
- c. 2025 Budget/Permit Reapplication/Collaborative Plans
 - We are still waiting for comments from EGLE on the ADW Collaborative plans that were previously submitted (permit applications were submitted in April 2024 and the collaborative IDEP was sent to EGLE in October 2023).
 - Based on what the facilitation team has heard, there may be substantial changes requested by EGLE to the plans. It's possible that they will ask that all outfalls be inspected. Currently the ADW relies on monitoring data to prioritize areas for advanced investigations. Wet weather sampling may also be needed in the TMDL. There are lots of unknowns as we wait for comments.
 - Typically the ADW adopts a budget for the following year at the October meeting. Because we have not yet received comments on the permit application, the facilitation team is suggesting that the ADW hold off on adopting a 2025 budget until December. By then, the ADW may have more information.
 - Valerie Novaes presented 3 possible budget options. The first version is very similar to what the ADW is familiar. The second version provided an idea of what may be required financially if the ADW is made to inspect all outfalls and the facilitation provided that service. This was a substantial

increase to the budget. The third option removed the dry weather screening of outfalls from the ADW budget. In this scenario, members would be responsible to perform their own inspections.

- Under all scenarios, there is a need to raise revenue or cut costs. Ron Akers suggested that it is more palatable to increase dues gradually.
- If we don't have any further information by December, it was proposed to pass a status quo budget for 2025. Budget items can be shifted mid-year if necessary.
- Greg Mayhew asked if there was any funding from the state available to help with the costs of the permit? In general, permit activities are not eligible for grant money. There is legislation currently at the state level that would define what makes a stormwater utility legal. This could open the door for communities to pay for the costs of stormwater management without the fear of legal action.

4) Status Reports per ADW Budget Framework

a. Planning and Reporting

- Leah Groya reminded the ADW members that their biennial progress reports will be due April 2025. Start making sure that your documents are in order to make the process easier. The ADW will be providing members with a summary of all collaborative activities to include with their report.

b. IDEP Activities

- Initial outfall screenings were completed on September 3rd, 17th, and 19th at 36 outfalls.
- 2 outfalls were found to have dry weather flow present and were sampled. Neither sample returned values over the follow-up threshold for Ammonia Nitrogen, Surfactants, or *E. coli*.
- Map updates were done based on field work investigations and GIS data provided from ADW members.

c. Progress Evaluation

- Ric Lawson reported that the facilitation team finished sampling for the season. The focus will not be on analyzing the collected data. There is an online dashboard to view the data (link provided in the packet)
- Macroinvertebrate monitoring was done in both the Lower Huron and Ecorse Creek. Findings are detailed in the packet.
- As mentioned in the budget discussion, future wet weather sampling as part of the TMDL is still an unknown. Members of the facilitation team have been meeting with a group led by SEMCOG to discuss the requirements of IDEP/TMDL. This group is interested in doing further investigation to determine what is working for source identification and what remediation techniques have proven to be effective.

d. Public Education Tasks

- The 2024 Schools for Clean Water Contest runs from October 14 –28 this year. There are 20 schools signed up to compete. Schools will compete in a pledge campaign to adopt a neighborhood storm drain. Schools with the most pledges will win cash prizes.
- E-newsletter – most recent edition went out to 300+ community leaders. The open rate was 37% and there were 3x higher than normal click rates.
- Photo Contest results are on the ADW website. There were 435 photos submitted and 16 ADW communities represented. The winning photos will be featured in the next ADW calendar. 51k viewed social media posts regarding the contest and there were 2k new visitors to the ADW website as a result.

5. Other Items and Announcements

- a. 2024 Meeting Schedule – December 3 (budget adoption)

6) Summary of Action Items and Other Announcements

- The action items, as identified above in bold/italics, were reviewed.

7) Adjourn